

Collision Repair Initiative

EPA Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards – Research Triangle Park, North Carolina

Geographic location or area of activity: National

Description of activity: Auto body shops emit hazardous air pollutants (HAPs). These shops are often located in residential and commercial areas and can pose health risks to individuals living and working nearby. EPA is developing a new rule prescribing auto body shop best practices to reduce these risks. However, the rule will not be enforceable for existing shops for years. To reduce emissions sooner, reduce exposure of those living or working nearby auto body shops, and those working at the shop itself, the Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards (OAQPS), Design for the Environment (DfE) and the Regional Offices are collaborating on an initiative to encourage voluntary adoption of the best practices in advance of the time the rule will be enforceable in existing shops. Of particular interest is the adoption of best practices that will not only reduce emissions and exposure to HAPs, but also will reduce costs for the shop owner.

Various programs within EPA are working closely with State Small Business, Air, and Pollution Prevention Programs to offer workshops developed by DfE that explain the hazards of body shop emissions and the savings that are possible by using the best practices. These workshops target shop owners, paint company representatives, paint instructors and students, compliance assistance staff and others, in venues selected to encourage the greatest involvement. Workshops have been or are expected to be presented at sporting goods shops, automobile assembly plants and paint training facilities.

There are over 45,000 auto body shops in the United States. The workshops will not reach each of them. Hence, to encourage adoption of the best practices in the industry, EPA and the States are also developing a short DVD that introduces and promotes the use of the best practices. To encourage viewing of the DVD by those in the industry, EPA plans to include appearances by celebrities such as NASCAR/NHRA drivers or racing team owners. Additionally, EPA plans to develop posters in cooperation with racing teams and automotive paint companies that will remind the painters that safety is important not only on the track but also in the shop. This marketing/distribution effort and delivery of future workshops depend on the resources that DfE, OAQPS, the Regions, and our state and local partners can leverage.

Intragency partners: EPA's Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards, Design for the Environment; EPA Region 4's Office of Policy and Management, Air, Pesticide and Toxics Management Division, and Office of Environmental Accountability

Local partners: State and local air, small business and P2 programs; schools; paint companies; racing teams and sporting goods dealers